M1 Middle East
BEDOUINS MJ4

The Bedouin Problem

The Bedouin cannot live in the desert without maintaining regular contact with the domain of settled society where he trades the surplus products of his economy for essential provisions. 361 609 621

In the past, the Bedouin have entered the cultivated zone either as conquerors, reducing the peasants to a state of semi-slavery and transforming fertile land into pastures for their herds, or as peaceful guests.[1)]

The conduct of the Bedouin on the outskirts of the settled region is determined by the ability of the government to defend the country and impose restrictive measures on the nomads. Once they accept the idea of compliance with certain conditions, they will soon become semi-nomadic and evolve towards sedentarization.

The substance of Bedouin policy in all the countries of the Middle East is the attempt by the political authorities to subject the nomads to a restrictive code of behavior calculated to protect the settled population, and to organize, facilitate, direct and accelerate their sedentarization. 361 166x

The Crisis in the Bedouin World

In modern times the settlement of the nomads has been regarded as one of the outstanding domestic problems in Arabia and the countries of the Fertile Crescent. The issue has been forced to a head by the crisis which the Bedouin world is under- 361 166x 178

---

1. Muller, 1931., pp 18-19

already settled, have resumed their nomadic mode of existence when political conditions permitted it. M. F. Jamali mentions a number of instances where fully settled tribes of Iraq turned semi-nomadic.[1] Joseph Barsalavsky concludes[2] that certain families of the Tayaha tribe in the Negev seem to have descended from the settled population of Zoar. A. Konikoff states[3] that economic reasons forced settled families of southern Transjordan to form themselves into tribes and adopt the way of life best suited to desert conditions. Max Oppenheim mentions[4] that the powerful Howeitat tribe of Transjordan descended from merchants and peasants.

Classification of Nomads

178
361
233
621

The constant changes of the social structure make a proper classification of Bedouin society extremely complicated.[5] Bonné divides the nomadic population into the following groups:

a. Desert Bedouin who are the genuine nomads roving over the vast areas lying between the Syrian desert in the north and the center of the Arabian peninsula in the south, and who engage in camel-raising exclusively.

b. Steppe Bedouin who, in addition to camels, also keep large numbers of cows, sheep and goats, and wander in the steppe, nearer the cultivation.

---

1. Jamali, 1934, p. 67
2. [illegible], 1946, pp. 89 – 100
3. Konikoff, 1946, p. 18
4. Oppenheim, 1943, p. 291
5. Bonné, 1948, pp. 322 seq.

361 c. Semi-Bedouin who occupy a position between Bedouin and Fellahin. They are already engaged in agriculture. 178 233 621 While they still live in tents, they ultimately turn to the construction of permanent huts and houses. 1)

Miller introduces the following classifications

1. Bedouin Tribes

361 233 a. Camel tribes, so called because they engage primarily in camel-breeding although they possess flocks of sheep. They are the true Bedouin of Syria, all belonging to The Anezeh and Shammar groups. 2) Their mobility enables them to maintain a 600 - 800 kil. radius of migration. They wander in the desert from September till late in June when they return to the border of the cultivated zone in order to trade their surplus livestock and purchase necessary supplies. They do not display the least interest in sedentarization. 3) X [166]

b. Sheep tribes, so called because they are chiefly preoccupied with intensive sheep-raising. The need for water for their animals restricts their wandering in time and in space. Early in the spring, before the

---

1. Miller, 1931, pp. 96 sqq.
2. The study of V. Miller is based on his observations of tribal life in Syria.
186 3. This statement was made by V. Miller in 1931. It seems highly questionable that within 18 years the attitudes among the true Bedouin should have changed so radically to enable Fawaz Sha'lan, Chief of the Ruala, to declare that "all the tribesmen now wanted land" (for settlement) cf. New York Times, September 6, 1949. Even changing circumstances have never had such an effect on the conservative mentality of the Bedouin, and it seems, therefore, that the declaration of Sha'lan, made for political reasons, must be taken with a note of caution.

68: Neubert S-4 (no date) 1952 MI Middle East BEDOUINS MJ4

174 Shammar and Aneseh groups from the Arabian desert into the more fertile steppes of Transjordania and Syria.

CHAPTER IV

Tribal Society and the Modern Arab State

619 621 Nomadic society, characterized by specific social, political and economic concepts, is incompatible, and hence often in conflict with the state and its institutions.

Social

Bedouin society is tribal, based on blood relationships, not recognizing any other ties. Its social customs are the result of adaptation to bare life and desert wandering. The concepts of "people" and "nation" are foreign to the nomad whose social outlook is limited to his tribe.

Political

"The characteristic socio-political trait of the nomadic tribe is the lack of political organization or political institutions."[1] The political body is the tribe, governed in loosely exercised by the sheikh and the Council of Elders. Unwritten desert law and custom are its judicial authority. The authority of the State is not recognized.

Economic

The pastoral economy sets the nomads apart from the majority of the POPULATION ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE.

---

1. Patai, 1952

BEDOUINS MJ4

Economic

361
233
178
241

The Pastoral economy of the Bedouin [1] has been seriously affected by the rapid development of the area. Former pasture lands are increasingly brought under cultivation with subsequent restriction of tribal grazing areas.

Although an exaggerated significance has been attached to the effects of the declining demand for the camel, this factor has dealt a severe blow to the economy of the true desert Bedouin who subsisted in the past exclusively on camel-breeding.

Social

178
●621

Tribal society has progressively disintegrated as the result of the sheikh's emergence as a big landowner. The interest which tribal leadership displays in agricultural life, is bound to influence the thinking and acting of the tribesmen. Sooner or later, they will follow the examples set by their sheikhs and settle down.

---

1. The statement of Alfred Bonne that "the term Bedouin economy is a contradiction in itself" and that "this economy is no economy in the accepted sense of the word" (Bonne, 1948, p. 36) may be exaggerated because the nomads make a valuable contribution to the economy by:
   a. profitably utilizing the scanty patches of grass that grow for fleeting moments over widely separated stretches of desert area, a resource which would remain otherwise exploited
   b. by supplying the people of the area with their needs of meat, wool and dairy products
   c. producing for local industry and export trade items like wool, grain, hides, and live animals and their edible products.

178
621 As a member of a well-knit patriarchal society the individual
enjoyed a relative sense of security, and his precarious
existence in the desert was made possible by tribal solidarity
and experienced and devoted leadership. With the dissolution of
the traditional ties the Bedouin may ultimately come to realize
the benefits that will accrue to him as part of a new social
order, that of the settled community.

Political

Y 166
657 The administrations of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Jordan
361 and Israel have been concerned with integrating the nomadic
element within their borders in the national community.

Saudi Arabia and Israel have formulated and are carrying out definite settlement policies, while the other governments of the area stimulate sedentarization by the creation of suitable conditions. Inadequate as the measures of the governments may be in themselves, they are bound to show results, once the disintegration of the tribal group is sufficiently advanced.

In order to make Bedouin sedentarization a lasting success, government-sponsored settlement projects must be designed and carried out.

For a long time the issue of "settling the tribes" has been a political slogan in the cities of the Arab countries, but only infrequently have the administrations of Syria, Iraq and Jordan taken concrete steps in direction of Bedouin settlement.

---

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

572 honour of the tribe as a whole is at stake, not alone the honour of the
484 individual tent-dweller.

The word *rafiq* means a friend or companion. and in the desert sense he is a man whose duty is to see you safely through his people's country (*ammamku*), and through his tribal territory, even if it so happens that his tribe is at emnity with your own tribe or people.

The *rafiq* usually does his business for a small fee.

A man desiring to travel, say from Kuwait to the Hijaz, would usually have to take *rafiqs* from the Mutair, Harb, 'Utaiba, Qahtan and probably the Bugum or other local tribe.

If a *rafiq* cannot for any reason accompany his client, it should be sufficient for him to give him his stock or cane (*'assa*), and notch same with the tribal *wasm* (mark) of his *bani 'dm*, or tribe, as a whole.

After handing over his *'assa*, the *rafiq* will let it be known by word of mouth, and arrange for the news to be passed on, that he has given So-and-So his marked *'assa* as *rufga* or safe conduct. No one will now touch the traveller throughout the whole length and breadth of the *dirah* owned or wandered over by the *rafiq's* tribe.

Under the strong arm of Bin Sa'ud, many efforts have been made to discourage and even abolish this system of the *rafiq* as unnecessary, and likely to bring the name and prestige of the Sa'udi Government into disrepute. Nevertheless, the *rufga* system is surreptitiously kept alive, as all men feel safer under a *rafiq's* protection than when trusting themselves to the tender mercies of some of the King's frontier guards, or inland governors.

It should be understood that as soon as you have safely passed through one tribal territory, the *rafiq* who has finished his job must find a new *rafiq* from the tribe whose territory you are about to enter, and so on till the journey is finished. It would be breaking the law of *rufga* if your *rafiq*, on completing his duties, deserted you and left you stranded. You could later get heavy compensation from the man and his shaikh, when you were able to prove your claim.

THE QASÉR (pronounced *gasir*)

621 The laws of *qasara* embody the duty of a Badawin towards his tent-neighbour.

k. Dickson G-5 (1929-47), 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

The Tent Neighbour

Chap. VII

The word *ǧaṭr* means a tent-neighbour, and the laws relating to the treatment of the *ǧaṭr* are held perhaps in even greater reverence than any other custom connected with an Arab's honour, not excepting even the laws of *dakhāla* and *wajh* and the treatment of a guest (*ṯhaif*). 621

The *ǧaṭr* is under Allah's protection, and many poems and stories have been written from earliest times dealing with the sacred rights of the *ǧaṭr*, and of the way in which an honourable Arab should treat a neighbour.

Strictly speaking, a tent-dweller is your *ǧaṭr* if he pitches his tent within the distance which you can cover when throwing your cane (*'aṣa*) or your camel-stick (*miskh'ab*). This was very carefully explained to me by Rashidi falconers at Araifjan in 1932 (Salim ibn Mahayus, Sa'ud bin Nimran, and Addas, the latter's cousin), who demonstrated the distance such sticks could be thrown by a strong man.

It follows, then, that anyone who pitches his tent close to a fellow Badawin's tent, becomes, *ipso facto*, his tent-neighbour, and enjoys the privileges of a *ǧaṭr*.

This is done every day where men are of the same tribe, and it means that groups so camped together can rely on each other for mutual support, and are bound to help each other, whether an enemy threatens all or one of them, or whether there is shortage of food, water or the like.

In everyday existence in the desert, a man's tent-neighbours will [591] normally consist of his male relations (*bani 'am*) or relations on his mother's side (*khawāl*), who camp together for mutual convenience and protection. Although all are strictly speaking tent-neighbours, and come under the protection of the senior member of that particular family, the term *ǧuṣara* is not usually applied to such collection of tents, seeing that the owners are all related, and are bound, by the ties of relationship, to stand by each other in any case.

Where the laws of *ǧaṭr* specially apply is when a member of a strange tribe, or even of a hostile tribe, comes and asks if he may camp close to such and such person's tent, become his neighbour and join his tribe in their migrations. If his request is granted, and it is practically never refused, then the following code at once comes into

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

621 force, though the *ǧasīr* will be well advised, if he can get hold of the shaikh of his protector's tribe, to kill a camel and invite him to a public meal. The shaikh will then see that everyone knows that the stranger is now under the tribe's protection.

The new tent-neighbour becomes, as it were, the guest of the particular Badawin who has given him permission to camp near him as his *ǧasīr*. He is henceforth an *'aẓīẓ* (a dear one), and like the *rafīq* or *khawi*, he enjoys special privileges and is not subjected to the rules and regulations of the protector's tribe, and the "*ǧasīr's* stick is now his sword" (*'asso-hu saif*).

The Badawin householder must protect the *ǧasīr* against all comers, and in return the *ǧasīr* must protect his benefactor against any raiders, even raiders of his own tribe.

Any cases or complaints now lodged against the *ǧasīr* must be preferred through the person protecting him. "Sue me," says the protector, "but not my *ǧasīr*, for I am in his place."

628 If any animal or thing is stolen from the *ǧasīr's* tent, and the latter
672 complains to his protector, the protector must either find the stolen animal or article, or make it good.

Should a stranger, or even one of his own relatives or tribesmen, insult a woman of his *ǧasīr's* tent and she cries out for help, the protector must immediately respond and come to aid her, whether her husband is with her or not. If the protector happens to kill the person insulting or harming the woman, he is not liable to pay blood money (*'idiyah*), nor is he exposed to any penalties from the slain man's relatives. On the contrary, the murdered man's kin must themselves pay any blood money due, as it was one of them who outraged the tent of a *ǧasīr*. Public opinion in the desert will always make an offender pay up.

628 If raiders attack a man's *ǧasīr* and carry off camels and mares, the
721 protector must make these good from booty he himself will capture in the next successful raid he engages in.

If the camels are stolen by camel thieves and a neighbouring tribe is suspected, the protector must himself join in the search and hire men to spy them out (*bil asa*) at his own expense.

If a *ǧasīr* happens to kill a man of his protector's tribe, and then comes to his protector's tent and asks his help, the latter must help

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

554 me by Shaikh Hamud himself, and later vor ned for by the Shaikh
619 of Kuwait on 9th September, 1932.
622 Shaikh Jada'an al Suwait, who succeeded to the Shaikhship of the
628 Dhafir after the death of Hamud, was camped near Athaiba and
577 Ruhail on the Kuwait–Iraq border in 1931. Hearing that one of his own tribesmen had fired at and wounded a Mutairi tribesman who was his *ghafir* at the time, even though the Mutair tribe and the Dhafir tribe were open enemies, Shaikh Jada'an had the offending tribesman brought before him, and with his own hand slashed him over the head with his sword.

The deed flashed through the Badawin world like lightning at the time, and Jada'an's name, as the upholder of Badawin hon ur,
[182] became almost as famous as that of his forbear. Unfortunately the Iraq authorities, with that folly which has frequently characterised them in dealing with the high-spirited tribesmen of the desert, imprisoned Shaikh Jada'an for several weeks, before they saw that they were making a martyr of a desert hero. This act cost them his allegiance. Shortly after, Shaikh Jada'an went over to Bin Sa'ud, taking half the tribe with him.

Shaikh Jada'an told me the story himself, saying that he only acted as he did in order to keep the vital Badawin law clean and untarnished.

So greatly have the Dhafir tribe preserved and guarded their good name in the above respect, that it is said of Mana, another famous Shaikh of the Dhafir, that the immediate cause of his death was the news (which was brought to him as he was riding home from a raid), that a certain well-known guest of the tribe had, in his absence, been attacked and slain. Certain it is that on being told what had happened, his heart seemed to stop beating and he fell forward on to his camel's neck and rolled to the ground a dead man. His daughter, whom I met in 1935, told me that the old man had literally died of a broken heart, and her words were vouched for by her husband, Shaikh Hautush al Suwait, cousin of Jada'an.

621 I myself have only once been appealed to by a person who was
671 my *ghafir*. I am glad to say that the results were eminently satisfactory.
577 It happened on this wise. I was in Kuwait, and it was in the hot month of July 1932, when everyone was sleeping on the roof at night. I was sleeping outside the old Agency dining-room, over the cook's quarters.

I: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

Chap. VII

A Midnight Appeal

Next door and behind the Agency premises resided the divorced tribal wife of a well-known pearl merchant. She was a pure-bred tribal lady of the Wasil sept of the Mutair, and had been put away by her husband because he wanted to marry again. With the lady lived her daughter, a girl of about fifteen. The daughter was all the mother had in the world and was the pride and apple of her eye.

The roof on which I slept at night abutted on to the house of the lady in question, her roof was only some eight feet higher than mine and owing to its proximity to mine she herself never utilised her roof for sleeping.

Apparently, although I did not know it at the time, my neighbour's daughter had a male cousin who aspired to her hand. He had custom and the *Shari'a* law on his side, and asked to marry the girl. The mother had steadfastly refused, on the plea that she had only her daughter to work for her, and without her she would starve. After much pressure the mother had apparently agreed to let her daughter marry if sufficient money compensation was paid her for the years of trouble and expense which she had incurred in bringing her daughter up.

Actually she wanted sufficient money to enable her to live. The young man and his people refused her demands and complained to the shaikh. The latter decided that the young man was within his rights, and ordered the girl to be removed to some distant relative's house, whence after due ceremony and regard for convention she would be married. Four times the shaikh's *fidawiyah*, or guards, came round to the mother's house, and each time she refused them entry. The law did not permit them to enter forcibly, but they vowed that law or no law her position as a woman would not prevent them next time breaking open her door and forcibly abducting the girl.

It was then that the incident happened. I was asleep on my roof and the night was hot without moon. It was about twelve midnight when I awoke to hear my name called, "Ya Abu Sa'ud—Ya Abu Sa'ud," came the voice out of the darkness, "Wake up and listen". Wide-awake now, I realised that someone was addressing me in a low whisper from my neighbour's roof, only a few yards away. "What is it?" I said. "Who are you that startles me like this at dead of night?" "I am your *ghafr*," replied the voice with a moan, "I am daughter of

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

621 So-and-So, and I appeal to you to listen to me." Realising then who
671 was speaking to me over the wall, I learned her whole tale. At the
577 end she said, "Ya Abu Sa'ud, I am in the deepest distress, I entreat you to help, I, your *qasir*, your neighbour, your tent *jar*" (another word for neighbour). "What wouldst thou that I do for thee, my sister?" I replied. "Go to-morrow morning," she said, "and tell Shaikh Ahmad of my plight, and fight for me and my daughter, for verily if they take her away I shall die." To all my pleading that she was not under my jurisdiction, she merely replied, "I know nothing about that. All I know is that you are my neighbour and the law makes it incumbent on you to come to my assistance."

The end of it was that I promised to do as she asked, and on the next day I went and saw the Ruler, apologised for butting in where I was not concerned, but pointed out that my *qasir* had appealed in such and such manner to me, and that as I understood the importance of such an appeal, I in turn begged his intervention on her behalf. The shaikh was so struck with my tale, and so delighted that I pleaded with him for one of his Muslim subjects against his own decision, that he turned round and said very charmingly, "Colonel Dickson, this law of the *qasir* is a very sacred one for us Arabs; that you know and understand the depth of its meaning is patent to me, else you would never have acted as you have done. The girl is yours, give her back to her mother and say I, Ahmad, revoke my orders previously given. Even as you listened to the woman who appealed to you as *qasir*, so likewise I will listen to you and grant your request, to prove to you how deeply I feel you have been honoured by one of my country-women, and how deeply I also honour the law of *qasara*." I was much impressed by the shaikh's words, and it will be long before I forget his remarkable reply. His orders were duly passed on to my neighbour, and to this day the poor woman shows her gratitude in little kindnesses to my servants. I never again saw her to speak to.

SHIMA

577 The Arab's idea of *shima* is much the same as our conception of honour, and I shall illustrate it only by the story given below.

Othman al Rashid of Buraida (an ex-horse-dealer of Kuwait) on

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
BEDOUINS MJ4

156 609 conditions, singly or in combination, cause the attitude of individuals or groups to differ in degree. As a general rule nomads who range habitually on the fringes of alien civilized areas are more dangerous to encounter than those habitually withdrawn in the wilds. Thus, the northern and western constituents of the great Anazah group are less safe to visit than the Shammar. Other contingent circumstances may make particular groups yet more hostile—if, for example, they range near the political frontier of two alien powers, as do the eastern Sinaitic groups; or in a difficult mountainous country, like the Huweitāt and Huteim east and north of Akaba; or where shelter and water can be obtained in hidden rocky recesses, as among the Beni Sakhr in the southern trans-Jordan region; or in insalubrious low-lying tracts such as the Yemen Tihāmah, or the southern part of Hasa, or the eastern part of the south coast, which account for the evil repute of the Zaranik (*Dhurūniq*), the Ahl Murrah, and the Qara tribes respectively.

Certain of the inland tribes, however, have reputations as bad or worse, and in their case one must look for peculiar causes. The ill fame of some groups of the Harb, for example—of one group especially, the 'Auf sub-tribe of the Masrūh section—is probably due to temptation long put in their way by the pilgrim routes, where these pass through a lean region debated between two powers. The repute, again, of the Qahtān, reckoned by the popular voice the most savage of Bedouin groups, may be accounted for by their seclusion and isolation along the northern fringe of the impenetrable Southern Desert. It is possible, however, that in both these instances report is worse than fact—in the one, because it is the well-known pilgrim route that has so often suffered, in the other because the northern Bedouins, who chiefly inform European minds, [266] know very little about the group in question. It is common talk, for example, that some of the Qahtān tribes are cannibal. On investigation, this imputation is always passed southward to the next group, till it finally fades away into *terra incognita*.

One word of caution, however, must be uttered about such cut-and-dried tribal reputations. They have not, in some cases, been always the same. The Huteim, for instance, who have a bad name for robbery now, used to be esteemed among the most inoffensive of nomads—almost on a par with the despised but universally tolerated Sulubba. Some one familiar with the desert talk of the moment should always be consulted before the desert itself is entered.

609 577 621 The least suspicious and most trustworthy Bedouins are, naturally, those of the largest and best-knit tribes, especially such as form part of a federation under the central authority of one of the

30: Gt. Britain G-S (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
BEDOUINS MJ4

greater Emirs or the Grand Sherif. These tribes are not only controlled to some extent and directed to a common policy, but also have a tradition of self-respect, which ensures the observance of the Bedouin code of hospitality. As Doughty has well said, what stands to a Bedouin for religion is that which men will think of him. Fortunately the fame of a lavish entertainer and a protector of the guest is a condition of nobility among Bedouins; and an appeal against any action inconsistent with this will seldom be disregarded. A properly authorized stranger, whatever his creed, should have little to fear under ordinary circumstances among such tribes as the Shammar, the Ateibah, the Wuld 'Ali, or the Ruweilah.

What, however, does proper authority mean to the ordinary Bedouin? Not the exhibition of any passport or other written document. Letters from the chief Emirs, the Grand Sherif, or other great sheikhs are very valuable if the traveller is passing from one of them to another; but in ninety out of a hundred desert camps he will find no one who can read or will respect paper. The one thing needful is a *rafiq*, i.e. a companion derived from the tribe through whose range one must pass, or from some tribe allied with it or authorized to share its range. If possible, he should be a man of importance whose face will be recognized instantly by the desert men—a race which, like other unlettered races, keeps a long memory for faces and a very wide knowledge of personalities. Still better if he has been attached to the traveller by some well-known chief. The *rafiq* must be kept well in evidence and to the fore in case of such a sudden attack as Shakespear experienced at the hands of the Ateibah in Woshm, when a good deal of harm was done before his *rafiq* could make himself known in the night to the raiders. In territories controlled by a central authority, e.g. a sovereign Emir, a well-known man from the centre may suffice throughout; but even then it is better to take a *rafiq* from tribe to tribe. There are one or two denominations of Arabs who are franked by all tribes and can themselves conduct a traveller anywhere in more or less security; but it is rather less than more. Such are the *'Uqeil* (Ageyl)—recognized carriers—and the *Sulubba* (Solubba)—tinkers, medical magicians, hunters—whom no one molests. But travelling with such folk entails the disadvantage that one must go where they wish to go and at their pace; and in disturbed districts near frontiers their aegis is not to be relied upon.

The efficacy of the *rafiq* system is based on the recognition that a particular range or dira (*dīrah*) appertains to each tribe, and even to each main section of a tribe. Tribes sometimes hold their diras in common, as the 'Ajmān and Beni Khālid are said to do at present in

30; Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
BEDOUINS MJ 4

609 northern Hasa; and there are certain districts, containing but few
486 wells, where several tribes, each having a right of watering, cross and recross each other's dîras, without committing thereby acts of trespass, though not without engendering frequent friction. Such, for example, are the steppe west of Jebel Shammar and that north-east of the same district towards the lower Euphrates valley. For the right of crossing a dîra the traveller is expected to pay in money or kind to the chief, who often drives a very hard bargain, but should not be regarded as levying blackmail. After all, in return for the payment, he and his tribe concede protection and allow the traveller to consume some of their very scanty supply of fodder and
621 water. All Arab society is patriarchal. Some one man can answer for each unit, and among the best Arabs for very large units. The traveller's chief danger arises where tribes are small or so broken up that not more than one or two families recognize a chief.

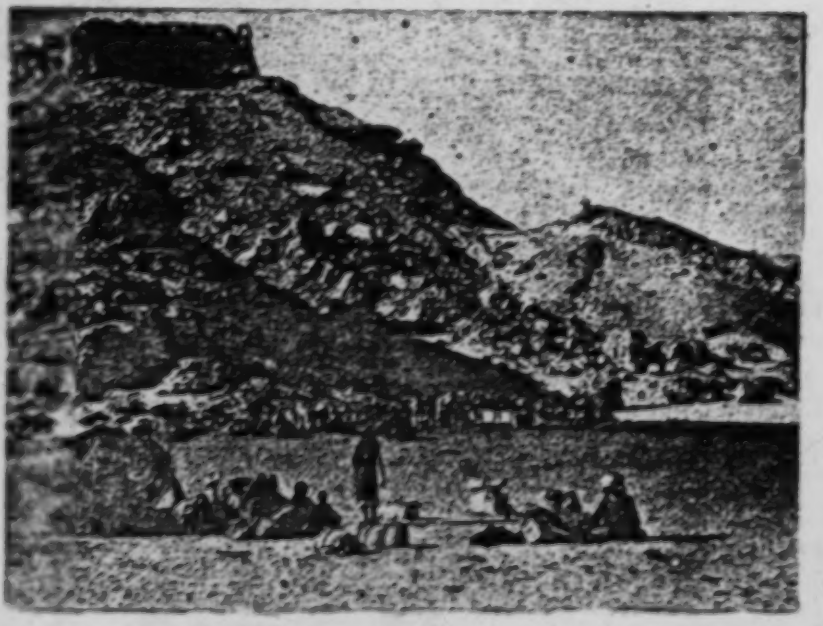
486 There is, however, one recognized exception to this sanctity of
721 dîras, namely, the right of every tribe, or even section of a tribe, to
577 raid any other according to a well-established code of warfare, unless barred by definite federation, treaty, or ancient friendship. To go
621 out on raid (*ghârah*) is the young man's chance of proving himself, and to provide him with that opportunity is virtually obligatory on all tribes, except the meanest. The greater chiefs, like their ancient cousins, the Assyrian kings, make an annual practice of the Raid. The farther afield it goes, the greater the glory in a society punctiliously sensitive to public opinion. Raiding parties may, therefore, be met very far from the ranges of their own people, and no district is quite safe from them. They may generally be recognized by their travelling light, without women, and on high-bred camels. The *rafîq* is powerless against them in his own dîra, except possibly through some lucky friendship on his part or the repute of his tribe. But raiding parties are not very particular. They will swoop down on a caravan without asking many questions or being much disposed to respect persons. Unless the traveller's party is very decidedly stronger than the attack, it should submit at once. Most of its belongings will be taken, but no life. Such submission is a well-recognized part of the game, and entails no slur on the courage of any members of the party.

486 The more the traveller can learn and retain in his mind of the
181 genealogy of individuals and tribes, in a land where pedigrees are very widely known back to a hoar antiquity and inordinately valued
574 the better for his safety and the impression he will make and leave on his hosts. He should know also, as far as possible, the political grouping of tribes and recent desert history. If, like Doughty, he

Hitti Photograph Collection (1944–47) [MS] Saudi Arabia
Box/Folder: MS4

To another camp upon encampment of Ibn Ma'aruf Sa'ar when he arrived at Mamzakh to prepare for a journey of sixteen waterless days across Arabia's Empty Quarter. The well here, which is stone-lined and over 200 feet deep, is one of the only two permanent watering places in Sa'ar territory

621



P 396 (C)

411 hand and all wore the distinctive carnelian-
151 studded dagger, and one and all impressed
me as virile, reckless and uncontrolled, but
701 humorous and friendly. While we sat among
621 them talking there was a sudden stir, for they
had noticed a dozen mounted Arabs approach-
ing rapidly across the dunes. Then someone
recognized one of the camels and they re-
laxed. These camels were stretched out and
travelling very fast, yet were urged to even
greater efforts by the wild yells of their riders.
They were the scouts, sons of sheikhs and the
very pick of the tribe, who set out each dawn
to scour the surrounding desert, keen-eyed for
the tracks of strangers. Lithe, hard-bodied
and alert, these lads rode their splendid beasts
with effortless mastery. They had heard the
firing and, thinking the camp attacked, had
ridden back to help.

621 Scattered upon the dunes around us were
592 small black tents, round which naked infants
romped, while dark-clad women moved about
gathering sticks and tending herds of goats.
Sometimes a family changed its site, for,
though fear of raiders had imposed upon
them the need to keep together, their restless
nomad instincts drove them to constant move-
ment within the wide confines of the camp.
Such short migrations provided an interesting
sight as they moved slowly past. The children
drove the camels, laden with tents, cooking-
pots, watering-troughs and ropes, the simple
requirements of their life; while the Bedu
mothers and the virgin beauties of the tribe
rode in the slow swaying camel-litters.

574 *That evening they feasted us on meat* and,
after the camel herds had drifted in at dusk,
brought us great frothing bowls of milk, the
nectar of the Arabs. The night was filled with
the haunting sounds of an Arab camp—the
ceaseless restless moaning of camels, the bark-
ing of dogs, the rise and fall of Arab voices
from their gathering-places round the fires,
and sometimes the distant harmony of song.
312 Next morning when the sun was warm we
drove our camels across the sandy plain to
water at the well, which is situated close
under high limestone cliffs on the northern
401 edge of the valley. A few Arabs had already
312 arrived and were fastening their pulleys to the
scaffolding around the well. It is over 200 feet
in depth and stone-lined, a monument to
some forgotten people in the dim past. At the
deep wells in the Najd the Arabs use their

P 398 (B) [TEXT CONTINUES ON P 400 (A) -- ANALYST